

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3486 because it will decrease the barriers that U.S. innovators and businesses confront when they pursue patent protection in foreign countries. Specifically, the legislation will standardize the application procedures of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and will make them consistent with The Hague Agreement concerning the international registration of industrial designs known as The Hague Treaty and the Patent Law Treaty.

The bill implements The Hague Treaty and Patent Law Treaty, which were ratified by the Senate unanimously on December 7, 2007. Unfortunately, neither of these treaties have yet to take effect in the United States because we have not passed implementing legislation. This bill addresses this problem in the following respects.

To begin with, the bill standardizes the application procedures so they're consistent with the procedures in other countries that are signatories to the treaties. Under current law, U.S. designers must file separate applications in each jurisdiction where they want to receive rights. This procedure is burdensome, complicated, and often involves several languages. Under this measure, the U.S. creators of industrial designs will be able to use a simplified application system by filing a single English language international design application with the Patent and Trademark Office. This modification will not affect the standard for attaining a design patent, but it will aid small companies in seeking to expand their businesses overseas by streamlining the application process. Additionally, the bill will extend the term of the design patent from 14 years to 15 years, which will benefit U.S. patent holders.

Second, the bill implements provisions under the Patent Law Treaty that revive applications which have been unintentionally abandoned.

Finally, by implementing the Patent Law Treaty, several hurdles which disadvantage American businesses will be removed. Implementing the Patent Law Treaty will amend patent application procedures for filing dates, fees, surcharges for fees, as well as for oaths, declarations, and claims submitted after the filing date. These modifications should save innovators precious resources.

In conclusion, the bill would benefit our Nation's economy by helping American innovators and businesses better protect their inventions overseas.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation